

Emergency Child Care FAQs

Updated 3/29/20: answers updated since the original 3/25/20 version are in red

Temporary Attendance Exemption Policy

Q: If I choose not to open to provide care to children of essential workers, will I still get paid for my CCAP families?

Yes. Use the COVID-19 Attendance Exemption Form, available [here](#), to receive an exemption due to the pandemic. You must certify that you agree to pay your staff for all scheduled work hours, regardless of closure or reductions in services, to receive the exemption and continue to receive CCAP payments. License exempt home providers are not required to complete the form.

Q: What does “paying staff” mean related to the temporary attendance exemption policy?

Programs are expected to continue to pay all staff each month at least the average amount they were paid in the previous month. Federal resources, including the Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loans and tools to support paid leave can help make this possible for providers. For more information, see the Paid Leave and Unemployment Insurance section of this FAQ.

If you operate a day care home and do not employ staff in addition to yourself, you must only continue to pay yourself.

Q: Does a provider have to charge parents who pay private tuition in order to receive the attendance exemption for CCAP parents?

No.

Q: Where should I send my attendance exemption form and monthly certificates for reimbursement?

Check your local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

<https://www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch> website to see how they are accepting paperwork during COVID-19. They will have instructions on their website or phone message for how they are accepting certificates and exemption forms.

Q: If I close, is my number of eligible days the number of days I could have been open or the number of days I was open in the month?

The number of eligible days is based on the number of days you could have been open.

Q: How should providers that typically submit attendance through the telephone registry system submit the temporary attendance exemption forms?

Check your local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

<https://www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch> website to see how they are accepting paperwork during COVID-19. They will have instructions on their website or phone message for how they are accepting certificates and exemption forms.

Q: What about providers who receive subsidy through the Department of Children and Family Services?

DCFS will continue to pay providers for all eligible days for child care through the time that programs are closed for COVID-19, so long as the provider submits a waiver form and attests that they are continuing to pay staff. Providers may use the same Temporary Attendance Exemption Form used by IDHS for DCFS CCAP payments. This form has been mailed with this month's enrollment forms to providers who receive payment for day care through DCFS.

Child Care Closures

Q: Am I able to continue to charge tuition while my child care is closed?

Child care programs should consult the agreement or contract they have with parents. The state does not regulate this area.

Q: Can private child care centers and homes reopen on April 8 when the Stay at Home Order is lifted?

The current Stay at Home Order extends until April 7th. The Governor is committed to keeping Illinois residents safe and slowing the spread of COVID-19 throughout the state, therefore the Stay at Home Order could be extended as this public health emergency continues. Monitor <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/For-Communities.aspx> for updates.

Emergency Child Care

Emergency Child Care Center: Application, License, and Exemption

Q: Where can emergency child care centers be located?

Anywhere licensed child care centers and license-exempt child care centers can be located. This includes child care centers, schools, community-based organizations such as churches and social services organizations, health care facilities or other workplaces for essential workers, and more.

Q: Can a license-exempt program located in a school or elsewhere reopen as an emergency child care center to serve essential workers?

Yes. There is no need to submit an application. License-exempt programs are allowed to operate in schools, institutions of higher education, and federal buildings; [click here](#) for more guidance.

Q: I've applied to become an emergency child care center. How will I know when I've been approved? What is the timeline for approval?

Per DCFS Emergency rules ([click here](#) to read), the Department will issue an emergency license to the applicant following review and approval of a center's application for an Emergency Day Care Program license. Centers that were already licensed pursuant to Section 407.50 will be granted a five-business day grace period during which they may operate while pending approval of the Emergency Day Care Program license.

Q: Is there a deadline to apply to become an emergency child care center?

No, there is no deadline.

Q: What documentation will DCFS require if I apply for an Emergency Child Care Center license?

In addition to the license application, you will be asked to submit a list of staff that will be working at the center (including background check applications for any new staff), your risk management plan, guidance and discipline policy, and medication policy. It is very important that you provide DCFS with accurate contact information and are reachable by DCFS staff so that they are able to follow up with questions or requests for additional information quickly.

Q: If I am a licensed child care center and I become an emergency child care center, will I lose my previous license? Will I have to reapply for my license later?

No. Centers will not lose their license to operate; they will be able to operate under their current license when the public health emergency has ended.

Q: Can emergency child care centers offer mixed-age groups? How do these rules apply to school-aged emergency child care, including full-day care as schools remain closed?

If you have mixed age groups, you need to follow the ratio for the lowest age group present.

Q: If I choose to remain open as an emergency child care center or as a child care home, am I required to accept children of essential workers outside my original enrollment?

No. However, if you have available slots, we ask that you consider serving children of essential workers outside of your original enrollment for as long as the public health emergency continues. Many essential workers need child care so that they can go to work serving and protecting their communities, and they need safe, caring child care providers like you to help them do that.

Q: At what rate will emergency child care centers that previously were licensed child care centers be paid for CCAP families? At what rate will homes be paid?

CCAP providers will continue to be paid at the per child, per day rates that went into effect in January 2020. Licensed homes will continue to be paid at the licensed rate even if they are operating as license-exempt during the emergency.

Q: What is the maximum number of children that an emergency child care center can serve?

As a guideline during the public health emergency, we encourage emergency child care centers to enroll fewer than 50 children; however, we understand that there may be some cases in which emergency centers in areas of high community need may be able to accept more children. In all cases children should be cared for in stable groups of 10 or fewer, and care should be taken that groups of children do not interact, including at drop-off and dismissal.

Q: Where can I report that I am open as an emergency child care provider?

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-rPw5zwqr3SbBuLwpS4JfXUzHtgf9yW-uoX44GiWGDqMRcQ/viewform> - this form helps CCR&R's fill the early learning helpline and online search for emergency child care and it will be required for programs wanting to apply for additional funds.

Q: How can I get additional supplies to support operations of an emergency child care center, such as toilet paper and soap?

Applications for stipends will be available on Monday, March 30, 2020 to providers through their local Child Care Resource & Referral agency. Local CCR&Rs are working with programs to match them with local availability of supplies (<https://www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch>). For more information, visit: <https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/>.

Q: What are the qualifications requirements for the staff of an emergency child care center?

Emergency child care center staff must meet the qualifications described in DCFS rules for Emergency Day Care Centers ([click here](#) to read). Each classroom must be staffed with at least one Early Childhood Teacher or assistant, or School-age Worker Assistant.

Early Childhood Teachers must:

- Be at least 19 years old
- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Have either:
 - o 60 semester hours of credits from an accredited college or university, with six semester hours in early childhood coursework, or
 - o One year of child development experience and 30 semester hours of credits from an accredited college or university, with six semester hours in early childhood coursework, or
 - o Completion of a Child Development Associate credential or Certified Childcare Professional credential

Early Childhood Assistants and School-Age Assistants must:

- Have a high school diploma or GED

In addition to the above qualifications, staff must meet a subset of the general requirements for personnel; these are outlined in the quick reference guide here:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Quick%20Reference%20of%20Rules%20for%20Emergency%20Child%20Care%20Centers.pdf>.

Providers who are in a higher risk group for COVID19, such as those over age 60 or with a pre-existing health condition, are discouraged from providing care during the time of the public health emergency.

Q: Can emergency child care centers hire floater teachers if they go between multiple rooms?

No. Per DCFS Emergency rules ([click here](#) to read), child care providers shall remain solely with one group of children.

Q: What training resources are available to license-exempt emergency child care staff?

A wealth of training opportunities are available on the Gateways to Opportunity i-Learning website. This includes the “Child Development, Health, and Safety Basics” course, which must be completed by license-exempt home child care providers in order to receive Child Care Assistance Program subsidy. Another fast introductory training option is the package of online modules that make up the Gateways Early Childhood Education Credential Level 1. Access all Gateways trainings here: <https://courses.inccrra.org/>.

Emergency Child Care: Child Care Homes

Q: If I am operating a day care home or group day care home, does the six-child limit include my own children? Can the children served come from multiple families?

Yes, in a day care home or group day care home your children count in the six-child limit. The children you serve can be from multiple families.

Q: Can day care homes continue to provide services to children of essential workers in multiple shifts? If so, is the group size limit six children per shift or per day?

For homes that care for children in multiple shifts, the group size limit is six children per shift (including the provider’s own children), so long as the groups of children do not overlap.

Emergency Child Care: Essential Workers

Q: Am I to expect CCAP payment or private tuition payment from parents who are essential workers and find another placement after I’ve closed?

We encourage child care programs receiving private pay from families to refer to the contracts and guidelines originally signed by both parties to come to an agreement on this difficult issue. An essential worker’s new placement may be able to receive stipends to help defray costs for that family to enable them to continue paying their regular child care costs.

Q: Can Day Care Homes offer care for children of essential workers during the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Yes. Day care homes may serve up to **six children** as a legally license-exempt home.

Q: Can the children of non-essential workers receive care in an emergency child care center or home?

No, only the children of parents or guardians who are essential workers can receive care at an Emergency Child Care Program.

Q: How will emergency child care centers be required to document that children’s parents/guardians are essential workers?

A written enrollment application is required to be on file for each child; which includes the work hours of the parents and the name, address, and telephone number of the parents’ places of employment.

Q: What type of paperwork will be required for a child of an essential worker to enroll in emergency child care?

Emergency child care providers may use their own enrollment forms for their programs, so long as they are sure to capture all of the information required for record keeping described in the Emergency Child Care rules (found [here](#)).

Q: Must CCAP families who are essential workers complete a Change of Provider form if they find another placement?

No, a Change of Provider form is not needed. Instead, the parent/guardian contacts their local CCR&R and requests to add a provider to their CCAP. This will allow their current provider (who is closed) to continue to be paid through the exemption and the new provider to be paid while providing care.

Q: Must all parents/guardians be essential workers in order to receive emergency child care? Must essential workers work outside the home in order to receive emergency child care?

Yes, the parents/guardians with whom a child is living must be essential workers and work outside of the home to access emergency child care.

Q: How can essential workers find and enroll in emergency child care?

The Early Learning Helpline of the CCR&R System is dedicated to support essential workers seeking emergency child care: Call toll-free (888) 228-1146 between 9:00am – 3:00pm. Or you can search online at <https://emergencycare.inccrra.org>

Q: Should emergency child care centers and homes charge families who are not recipients of CCAP?

Yes. In addition, an application will be available on Monday, March 30, 2020 for stipend funds to support emergency child care operations, including private tuition. For more information, visit: <https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/>.

Emergency Child Care: General

Q: Is there guidance on how staff at emergency child care centers can remain safe? Where can providers find risk management and health and safety guidance?

Please visit the GOECD Emergency Child Care for Communities & Providers page (<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/For-Communities.aspx>) for a tool kit of resources that includes the following guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

Q: I heard that stipends were available for emergency child care providers. How do I access the stipend?

For child care providers who are legally operating during this pandemic to provide care to children of Essential Workers, stipends will be provided to help them address their added costs. Applications for the one-time stipend will be available on Monday, March 30, 2020 through local Child Care Resource & Referral agencies. Providers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Licensed homes (operating during the emergency as legally license-exempt homes serving up to six children) will receive \$750. Centers (legally license-exempt or with an Emergency Child Care License) with one to two classrooms open will receive \$2,000, centers with three or more classrooms open will receive \$3,000.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Q: What changes or flexibilities can I expect for CACFP? Will providers who have closed be partially paid through the food program?

Even with program closures, we strongly encourage you to develop a plan for ensuring that children in your program that receive free and reduced-price meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) continue to receive meals. You may wish to reach out to your local school district to explore partnering with them or contact the ISBE Nutrition Department at CNP@isbe.net to determine how to provide additional meals in your community.

Paid Leave and Unemployment Insurance

Q: If we are ordered to close and do not choose to reopen as an emergency child care center, what financial assistance options are available to my center and my staff?

Federal Resources: [Note—additional supports may be available through the CARES Act signed Friday, March 27, 2020. Information will be shared in the coming days.](#)

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, [HR6201](#), includes supports for small businesses such as paid leave, unemployment insurance flexibilities, food stamps flexibilities, and expanded small business loans.

- *Paid Leave*: The law provides paid sick leave and emergency Family Medical Leave, including for families staying home with children due to school closures. Providers must pay wages to staff on leave using money they would have paid in payroll taxes. Providers can apply for refund if leave wages are larger than payroll taxes for the quarter: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/treasury-irs-and-labor-announce-plan-to-implement-coronavirus-related-paid-leave-for-workers-and-tax-credits-for-small-and-midsize-businesses-to-swiftly-recover-the-cost-of-providing-coronavirus>
- *Unemployment Insurance*: The law suspends work search requirement and one week waiting period for unemployment insurance: <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/COVID-19-and-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx>
- *Food Stamps (SNAP)*: The law suspends work requirements and extends certification period for SNAP (food stamps): <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=33698>

The Small Business Administration has accepted Illinois' application for Economic Injury Disaster Loans for small businesses.

- Non-profit and for-profit businesses are eligible
- Loans can be up to \$2 million
- Interest rates: 3.75% (for-profits), 2.75% (non-profits)
- Repayment period: 30 years
- Application link: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>
- More information: <https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>

State Resources:

Temporary Attendance Exemption Policy: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=123118>

- For child care centers and homes receiving CCAP, a temporary attendance exemption policy has been put in place. Centers and homes may apply for an exemption from the 80% attendance requirement due to COVID-19 if they certify that they will continue to pay staff.

Small Business Loans and Assistance

- Governor Pritzker recently announced a new package of emergency assistance programs totaling more than \$90 million for small businesses in need of additional capital.
- Businesses can apply for these programs on the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/Pages/EmergencySBAInitiatives.aspx> or read more information on the State of Illinois Coronavirus Response site: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Resources/Pages/For-Business.aspx>.
- If you have any questions, please call 1-800-252-2923 or email CEO.support@illinois.gov.

Q: Are companies with <50 or >500 employees eligible for the paid leave provisions?

Employers with more than 500 employees are exempt from the paid leave provisions outlined in the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Employers with fewer than 50 employees are eligible for the paid leave provisions, including the ability to use payroll taxes to cover paid leave and to request a reimbursement if paid leave costs are greater than payroll taxes owed. Employers with fewer than 50 employees are also eligible for an exemption from the requirements to provide leave to care for a child whose school is closed or child care is unavailable in cases where the viability of the business is threatened. Read more here: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/treasury-irs-and-labor-announce-plan-to-implement-coronavirus-related-paid-leave-for-workers-and-tax-credits-for-small-and-midsize-businesses-to-swiftly-recover-the-cost-of-providing-coronavirus>.